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ABSTRACT

As part of a continuing program designed to provide Nevada's school population with information that will facilitate greater awareness and understanding of both past and present Native Nevadan lifestyles and contributions, this generalized curriculum guide might constitute a social studies unit on early Indian culture for upper elementary and/or junior high schools. Subject titles are: (1) Shelter; (2) Clothing, Ornaments and Adornments; and (3) Warfare and Weapons. The narrative is supplemented by pictures (sketches of plants, food gathering tactics, and arrowhead types); a Nevada map (delineation of county boundaries and the historical territories of the Washoe, Northern and Southern Paiute, and Shoshonean Indian tribes); and word study lists (50 words). Emphasis is on the influence of climate and terrain on shelter type; close sleeping quarters; ceremony relative to the dead; and nomadic tendencies. Also discussed are the influence of plant and animal life on dress and ornamentation, the limitations of Native Nevadan warfare, and identification of weapon finds and types. Word lists include such terms as elements, excavations, cache, barter, limitations, renegades, obsidian, stalking, foreshaft, and sites. (JC)

INDIANS OF NEVADA

by

HELEN DUNN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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FOREWORD

The Nevada State Department of Education is pleased to be able to publish this series as part of a continuing program of information on Nevada Indians.

This program is designed to provide Nevada's school population with information in order that they may have a greater awareness and understanding of the lifestyle, past and present, as well as the contributions made by the Native-Nevadans.

No attempt has been made to edit or alter the author's original manuscripts.

Chas. H. Poehlman, Consultant
(Indian Education)

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ABOUT

HELEN DUNN

A native of Leadville, Colorado, she came to Goldfield, Nevada, when a baby. There she went through the school system, and graduated from Esmeralda County High School with high honors.

She is a graduate of the University of Nevada, specializing in history and received a B.A. An M.A. degree in Journalism was received from the University of Colorado.

She taught in Goldfield High School and in Reno's Billinghurst Junior High School.

Helen Dunn has long been identified with the study of Nevada. She fostered such a study at Billinghurst where a section of the school's library is known as the Helen M. Dunn Nevada History Library.

She has written several Nevada booklets which will be published by the Nevada State Department of Education.

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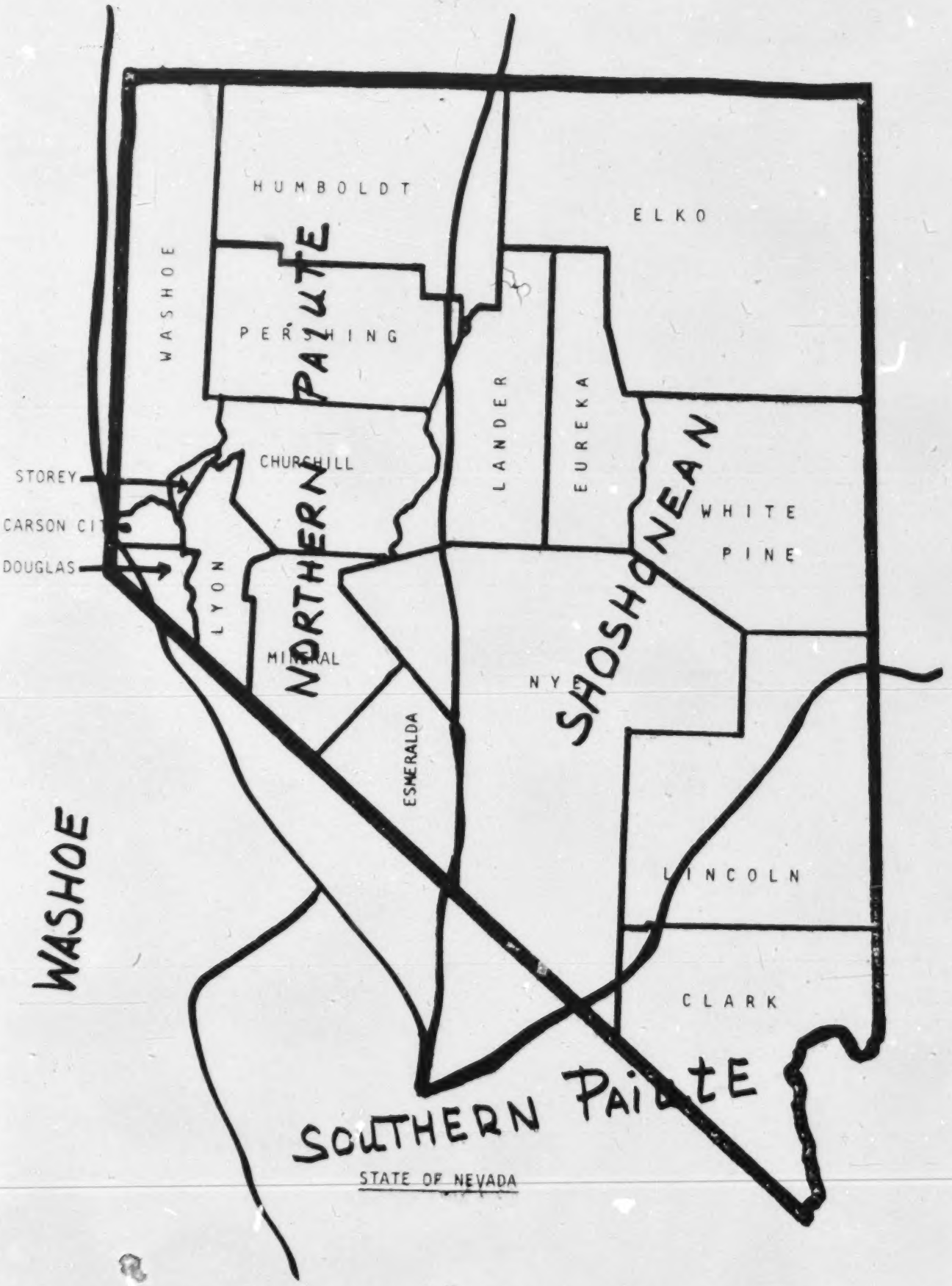
HUMBOLDT
ELKO
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PERSHING
LANDER
EUREKA
WHITE PINE
STOREY
CHURCHILL
CARSON CI
DOUGLAS
LYON
MINERAL
NYE
ESMERALDA
LINCOLN
CLARK
WASHOE
NORTHERN PAIUTE
SHOSHONEAN
SOUTHERN Paiute
STATE OF NEVADA

VOLUME 4

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Picture

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Word Study

* * * * * * * * *

SHELTER

The climate and terrain of the region now known as Nevada had much influence on the types of shelter used by the Indians. The Indians had to turn to the resources at hand to protect them from the elements of nature. Because they moved about searching for the staples of life, their shelters were simple and not often permanent.

In the summer time, it was more comfortable for the Indians to live in the higher elevations, that is, 6,000 to 7,000 feet. Here they found the cottonwood, the willow tree, the juniper and buck brush. In the winter, the desert regions between 3,000 and 4,000 feet were the home areas. Shelters were made to ward off hot sunshine and the biting storm winds and heavy snow. Except for the rock shelters, houses were temporary.

The summer houses were often made of tule put over a simple framework of poles which were stuck in the ground. The tule was laid up and down in several layers and woven together with more tule or with pounded and twisted fiber bark from the ever-present sagebrush.

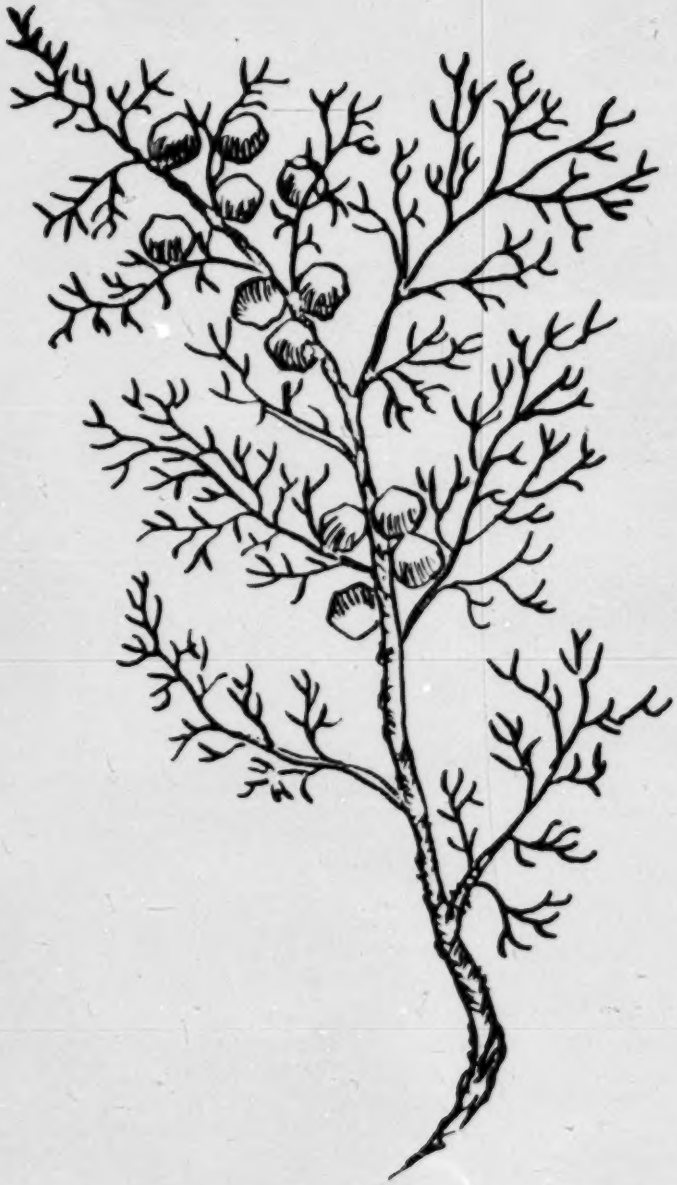
Winter houses had bark over them. Sometimes, the hides of larger animals were used.

The house of the Indian was always clean and was set on fresh soil. The house was often used to store food or other necessities. This, called a cache, was either placed in a pit dug in the ground floor or in caves in nearby rocks, or in willow baskets buried deep in dry sand.

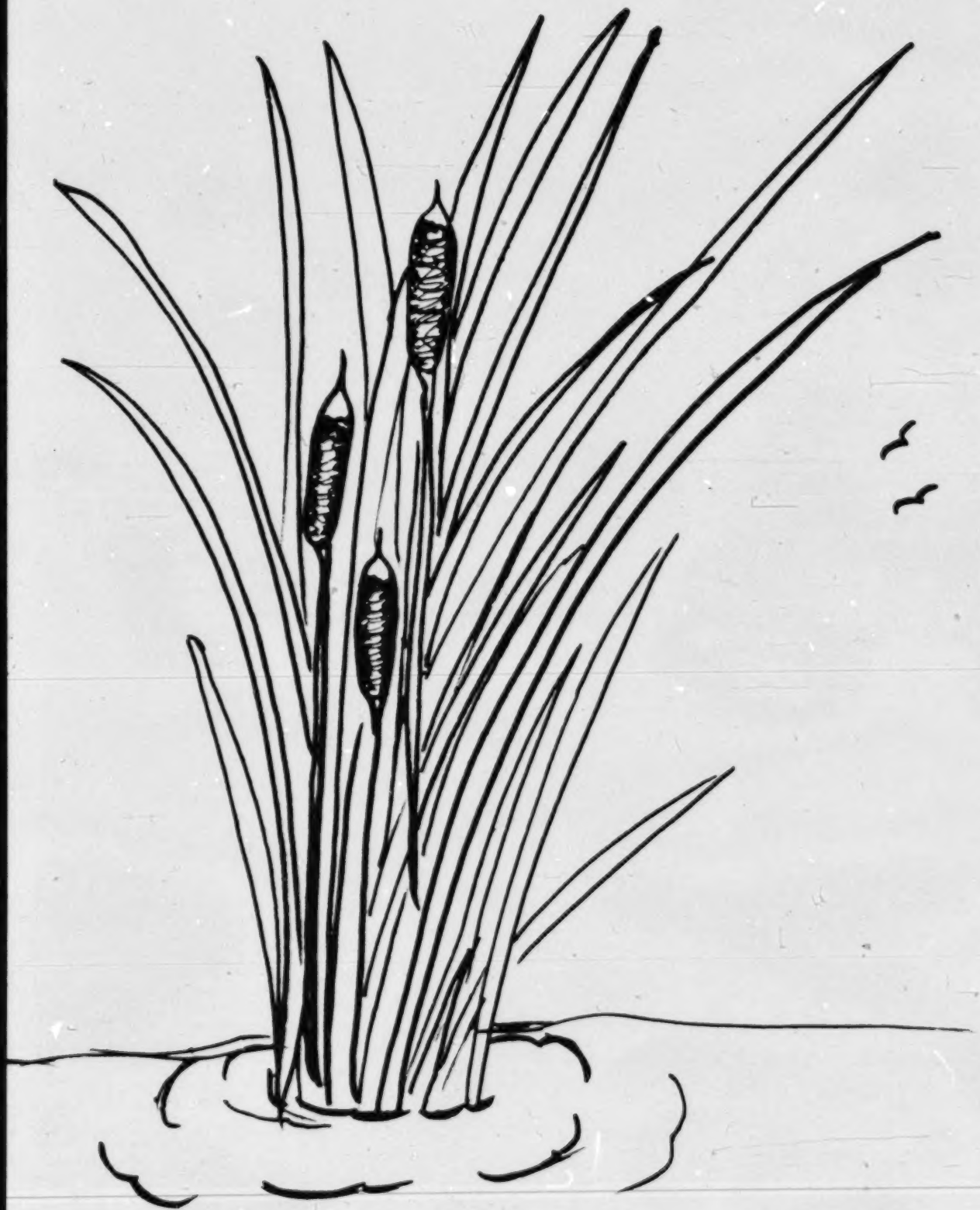
Sweat houses, six to eight feet in diameter and four to five feet high, were made of tule or skins stretched over a willow framework. Hot rocks were brought in and water was poured over them.

The Indians were active in the daytime searching and gathering food. At night they sat around the fires or slept close together. These were simple ways of keeping warm.

The Indians had feelings about the dead in regards to their simple houses. When an Indian died, his house was burned. Because the Indians kept their shelters very clean, it is thought that this custom of burning the house of an Indian who had died was a type of fumigation.



Juniper



Cat-Tail
Tule

Big Sagebrush
Artemisia Tridentata

 0012

CLOTHING, ORNAMENTS, ADORNMENT

As in the case of food and shelter, climate and terrain were important factors in determining the types of clothing worn by the Indians. The Indians depended, in large part, on plant and animal life for material to cover their bodies, both for summer and winter wear.

From the finds of prehistoric days and on down through the years, some changes in style were made. Some clothing used in the prehistoric days was not used later, and some used in the later years was not found in excavation finds of prehistoric times. At any rate, it was known that the Indians did use such clothing as blankets of birdskin, shredded fiber aprons, sandals, moccasins, and fur blankets. A study of the Northern Paiute, Washoe, and Wada bands discloses that the Indians wore clothing made of tule (sandals, skirts, and capes) and shredded sagebrush bark (skirts and capes).

Blankets of bear skin were worn by some bands, while others used deer hides for body covering such as capes, breech-clouts, aprons, and leggings. (When deer were scarce, bits of the hides were saved and used for moccasins.) Blankets were also made of rabbit fur and were used both as a body covering and as a blanket to sleep under.

A note of interest concerning the clothing of these Indians was that with the exception of buckskin, the clothing wore out quickly. This, perhaps, was a good thing because the clothes could not be washed.

It is known from survey studies that the Nevada Indian had a pride in his person and sought to adorn himself. Often to get items for this purpose, he had to trade with bands from California and the Pitt River group. Beads, discs, and pendants made from shell were used for adornment. These were worn separately or used with berries from such plants as the chokeberry, wild rose, and dentalia.

Styles of adornments changed and some even disappeared, but one thing is certain--Indian men really went for the "styles found at hand." They wore ornaments of bone, an example of which was the pointed rabbit bone which was pierced through the nasal septum. (Chief Winnemucca of the Northern Paiute was photographed with such an ornament.) The Indian men also wore bands of porcupine quills. The Wada-Paiute wore flicker feather bands, some of which were long enough to reach the ground when worn around the neck.

The Indian women also wore many ornaments. Their ear lobes were pierced and from them abalone shells were suspended. The hair brushes they used were made from the tails of porcupines.

Both the men and the women of the Nevada Indians used paint for adornment. The paints were obtained from the soft rock or from a substance dug from the earth. This substance was crushed with the mano and metate and mixed with water to form paint.

***

WORD STUDY

1. terrain
2. source
3. influence
4. elements
5. resources
6. temporary
7. tule
8. fiber
9. cache
10. fumigate

1. excavations
2. buckskin
3. survey
4. pendants
5. dentalia
6. abalone
7. ceremony
8. vanity
9. pierce
10. barter

RABBIT DRIVE

WARFARE AND WEAPONS

Through study of the Nevada Desert Culture Indians, it is assumed that they were relatively peaceful. They did show some resistance to early non-Indians traveling through their land. There was no organized warfare as we know and think of it today. Several reasons might be given for this--the small size of the bands, the need to spend most of the time on gathering food, and the limitation of weapons. It is thought there were some raids by traveling Indian groups and, thus, a threat to their survival.

What were some of the weapons used by the Indians? What were they like and how were they used?

The throwing spear was used, study tells us, until the bow and arrow appeared. Both of these had limited range, so, it is thought, their effectiveness depended upon skills of stalking and surprise in order to kill an enemy.

Scalping was not generally practiced by the Indians of the Desert Culture. Its use was reserved for "very bad" people. Stones were used as weapons, because the stoning to death of renegades and evil medicine men was known to have taken place. Wooden clubs, as well as clubs and sticks with sharp pieces of worked stone attached, were used. These, it is thought, had a two-fold purpose--obtaining game and combat.

Let's learn more about the bow and arrow, which was the weapon of these early Indians.

According to some accounts (especially those of the Honey Lake Paiutes), the bow used then was shorter than the common hunting bow of today. It was about three feet long and was usually made of juniper which had been cured with the bark still on the trunk. The bow-strings were made of deer sinew, sometimes intertwined with sagebrush bark. The best arrows were made from arrowcane, but serviceberry was also used. Greasewood and serviceberry were used for foreshafts, which often were rubbed with the sap from a fresh juniper limb and then pushed into the arrowcane shaft. Sinew was bound around the arrow where the two shafts joined in order to help the juniper pitch glue hold them together. Feathers (usually three) were then attached so that the arrow would be straight in flight.

Perhaps the most interesting of the weapons used by the Indians was the arrowhead or dart point. These were made of various sizes and weights and used different stones. Many of these were found by people

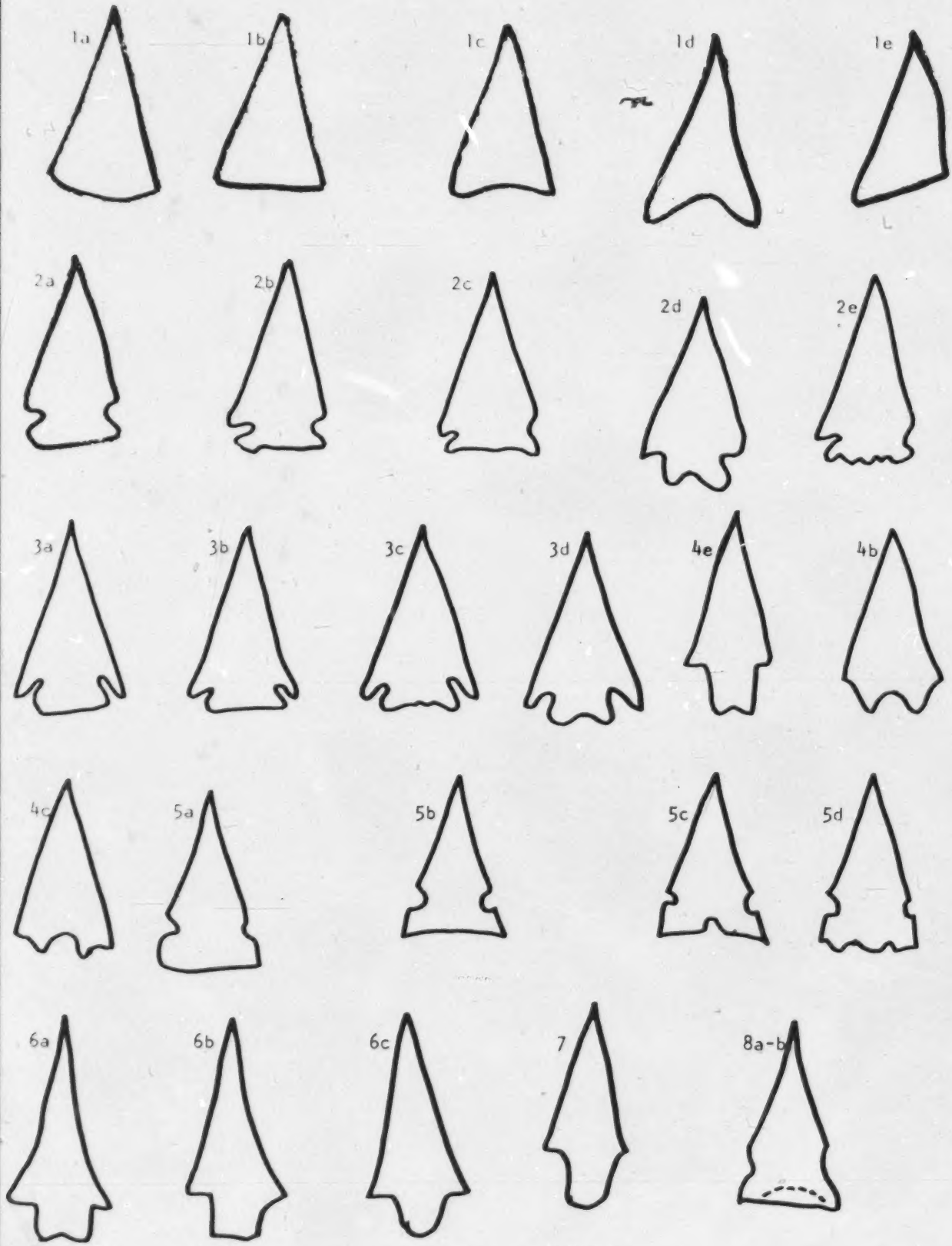
combing the Great Basin area in search of Indian artifacts. Some of them have been uncovered by scientific exploration. The discoveries of the latter bear the names of the sites of exploration and excavation. (The following drawings will explain more about these artifacts.)

The size of the arrowhead determined its target. The heavier points were made for better performance with the bow. However, small ones had the special purpose of killing waterfowl and small game. These were called "bird points".

Some people who have found pieces of worked obsidian have mistakenly thought they have uncovered arrowheads. Many of these are stones which were inserted in wooden clubs or scraper handles by the Indians.

Arrowheads were made by percussion technique or by striking the piece with another stone. This broke off a "spall". The pressure technique was also used. In this case, the piece was pressed with a piece of antler or bone until a flake flew off. It is not known which of these techniques is older. It is known, however, that the makers of the arrowheads were extremely skilled and were regarded as prized members of the band of Indians.

Point Types found at the Karlo Site (Las-7), Francis A. Riddell (ibid)



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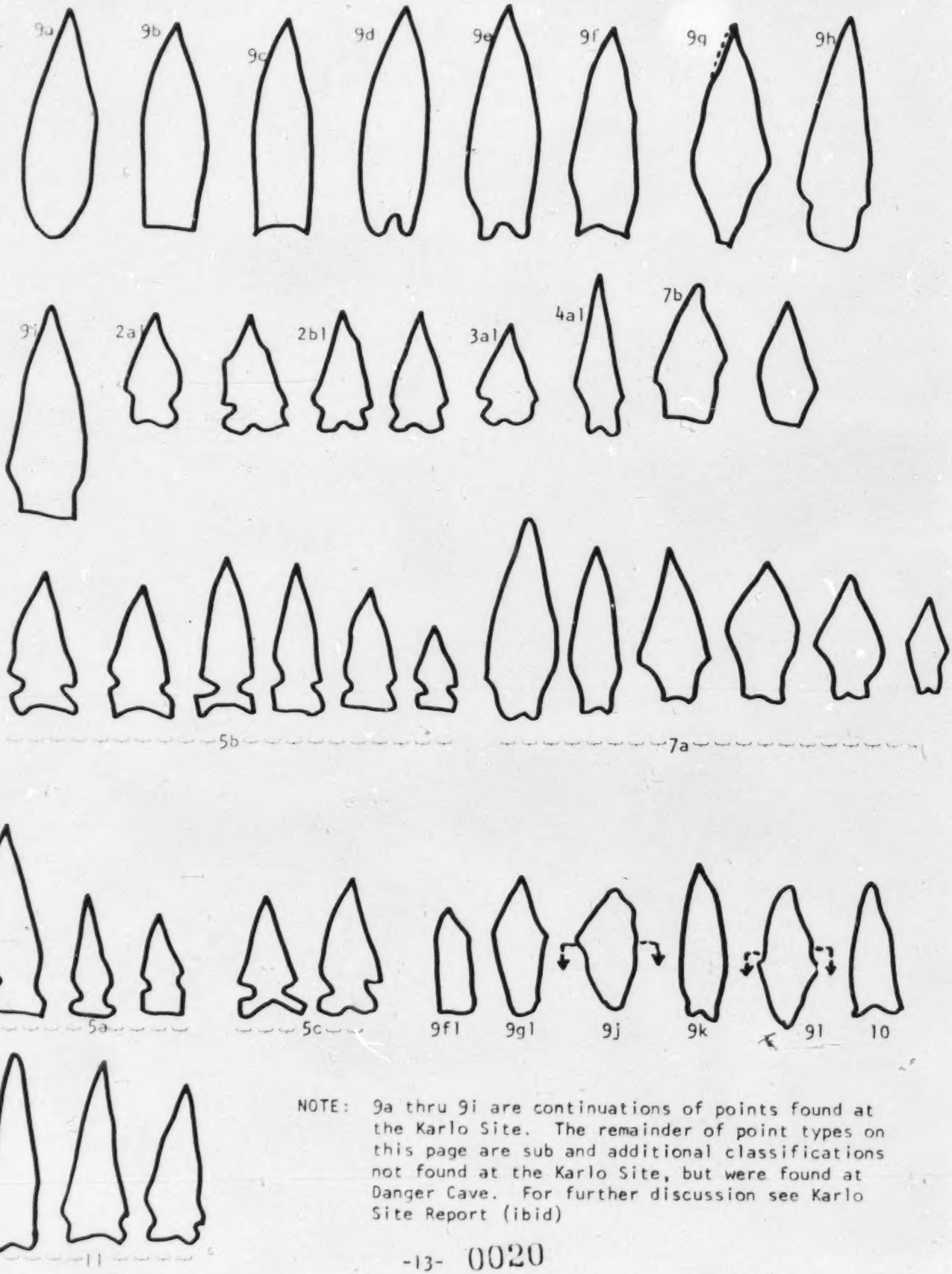
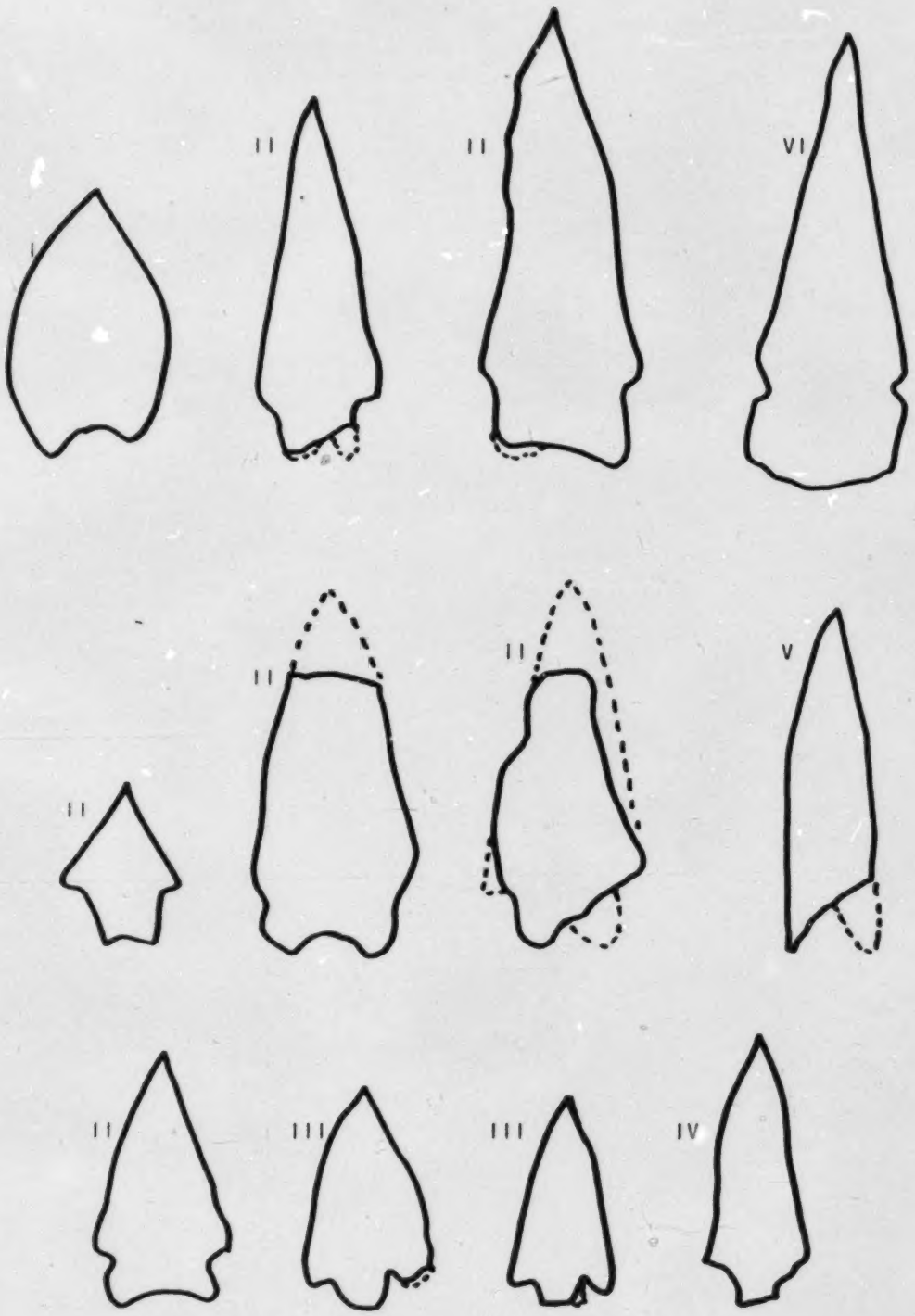


NOTE: 9a thru 9i are continuations of points found at the Karlo Site. The remainder of point types on this page are sub and additional classifications not found at the Karlo Site, but were found at Danger Cave. For further discussion see Karlo Site Report (ibid)



Typical Points excavated by Harrington at Lovelock Cave, Nevada, from the report of Gordon L. Grosscup, University of California Archaelogical Survey Report Number 52. Issued October, 1960.

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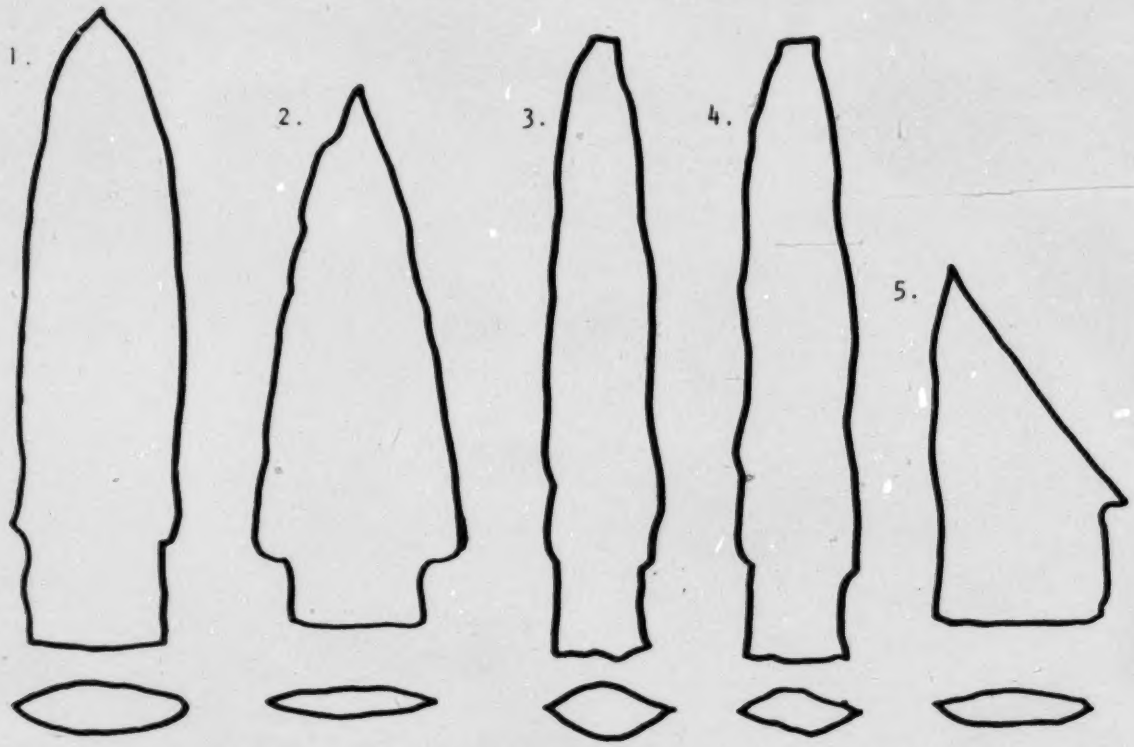
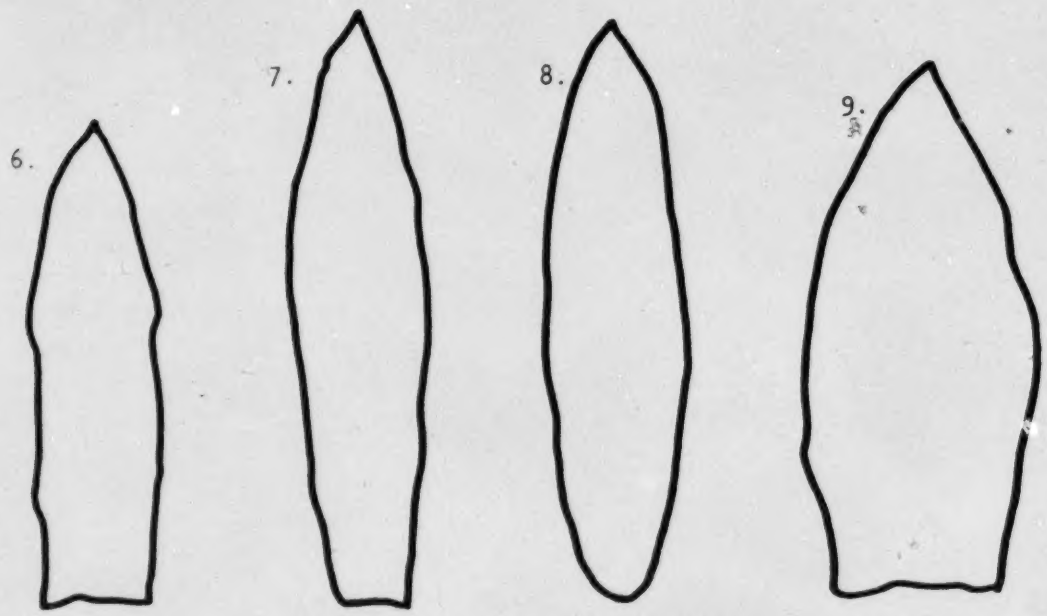
FAMOUS POINT SHAPES ACCORDING TO LOCATIONS FOUND



Artifacts from the Cody Complex: 1. Scottsbluff type I; 2. Scottsbluff type II; 3. Eden; 4. Eden; 5. Cody Knife.



6. Angostura

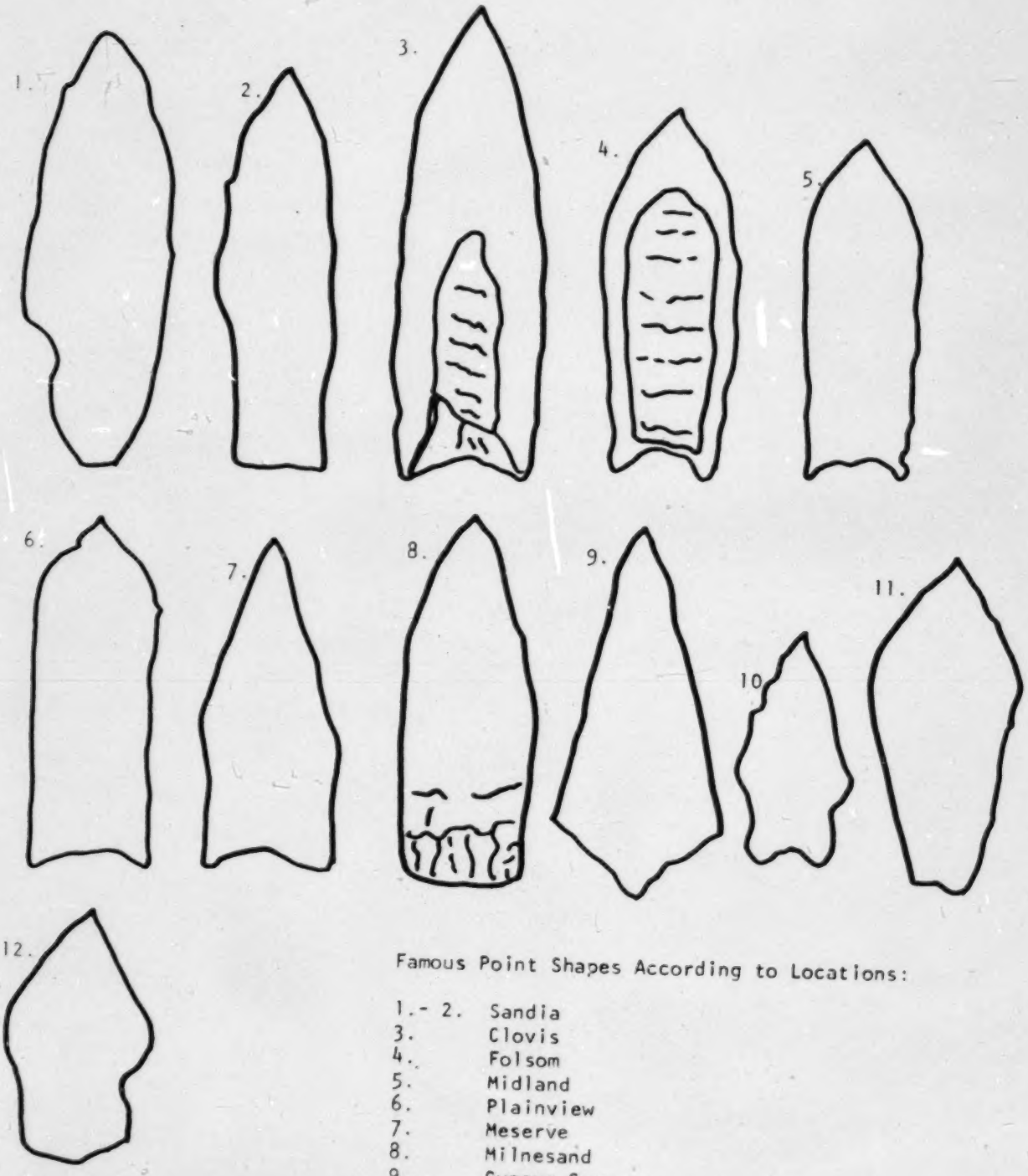
7. Agate Basin

8. Agate Basin

9. Brown's Valley

 0022

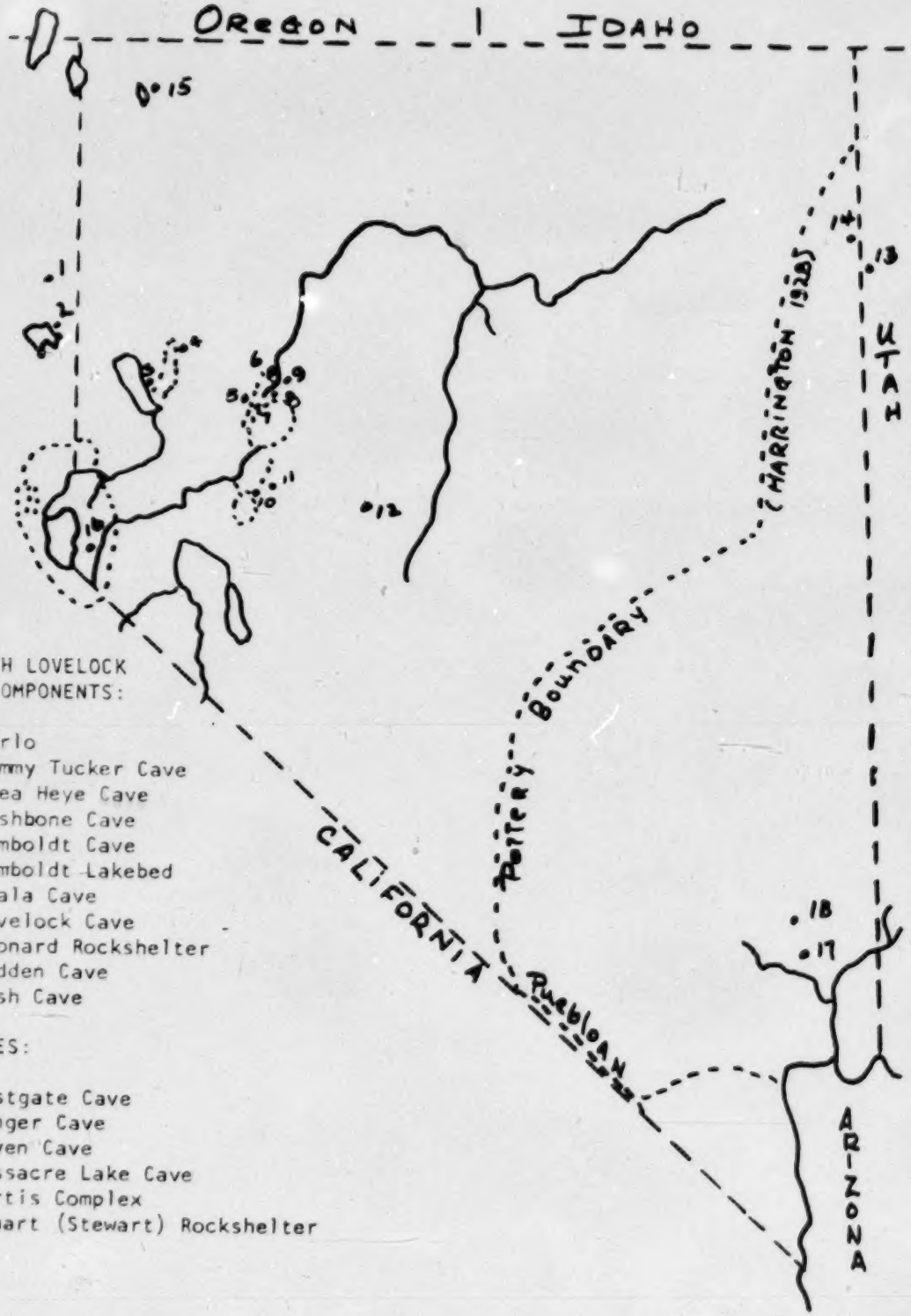
FAMOUS POINT SHAPES ACCORDING TO LOCATIONS FOUND



Famous Point Shapes According to Locations:

1.- 2. Sandia
3. Clovis
4. Folsom
5. Midland
6. Plainview
7. Meserve
8. Milnesand
9. Gypsum Cave
10. Pinto Basin
11. Lake Mohave
12. Silver Lake

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



SITES WITH LOVELOCK CULTURE COMPONENTS:

1. Karlo
2. Tommy Tucker Cave
3. Thea Heye Cave
4. Fishbone Cave
5. Humboldt Cave
6. Humboldt Lakebed
7. Ocala Cave
8. Lovelock Cave
9. Leonard Rockshelter
10. Hidden Cave
11. Fish Cave

OTHER SITES:

12. Eastgate Cave
13. Danger Cave
14. Raven Cave
15. Massacre Lake Cave
16. Martis Complex
17. Stuart (Stewart) Rockshelter

WORD STUDY

1. assumed
2. resistance
3. limitations
4. threat
5. survival
6. weapon
7. spear
8. range
9. skill
10. stalking

1. reserved
2. renegades
3. combat
4. juniper
5. cured
6. bark
7. foreshaft
8. sinew
9. pitch
10. artifacts

1. scientific
2. excavations
3. performance
4. obsidian
5. inserted
6. percussion
7. flake
8. skilled
9. sites
10. agate